

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00

INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 SP-02 L-01 DODE-00 NEAE-00

H-01 EB-04 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /039 W

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 295

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 8145

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, SA

SUBJECT: SALE OF F-15S TO SAUDI ARABIA

1. SUMMARY. ON DECEMBER 1, I MET WITH PRINCE SULTAN IBN ABD AL-AZIZ AL-SA'UD IN HIS CAPACITY AS ACTING MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN ORDER TO CONFIRM THE DATES OF THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT CARTER TO THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA. DURING THE COURSE OF THIS MEETING, PRINCE SULTAN EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE PETULANCE OVER U.S. FOOT DRAGGING ON SUPPLYING THE F-15 TO SAUDI ARABIA. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF RECENT MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS, PRINCE SULTAN SAID THAT SAUDI ARABIA WAS AS YET UNABLE TO SATISFACTORILY DETERMINE THE U.S. POSTION ON SADAT'S RECENT MOVES. PRINCE SULTAN HASTENED TO ADD THAT IN HIS CAPACITY AS FOREIGN MINISTER HE COULD EXPRESS HIS APPRECIATION FOR U.S. POLICY SUPPORT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, HOWEVER, AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE, HE MUST EXPRESS HIS CHAGRIN WITH REGARD TO U.S. POLICY TOWARDS ARMS SALES TO SAUDI ARABIA. PRINCE SULTAN STATED THAT THE F-15 CASE HAS BEEN IN THE MILL NOW FOR OVER TWO YEARS AND HAS YET TO BE RESOLVED. HE POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS A U.S. AIR
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FORCE TEAM THAT MADE THE RECOMMENDATION THAT SAUDI ARABIA SHOULD HAVE THE F-15S.

3. I EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT ANY MILITARY SALES IN EXCESS OF 25 MILLION DOLLARS MUST BE APPROVED BY CONGRESS. SOME TIME AGO, THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE HAD PASSED A RESOLUTION ASKING THE ADMINISTRATION NOT TO SUBMIT

ANY MORE MILITARY SALES PROPOSALS DURING 1977 SO THAT CONGRESS COULD CONCENTRATE ON CRUCIAL LEGISLATION, SUCH AS THE PRESIDENT'S ENERGY PLAN.

4. I FURTHER POINTED OUT TO PRINCE SULTAN THAT NOT ONLY WAS PRESIDENT CARTER COMING ON JANUARY 3, BUT THE SENATE MAJORITY LEADER AND THE SENATE MINORITY LEADER WOULD ALSO BE PAYING A VISIT TO BE FOLLOWED BY CONGRESSMAN ZABLOCKI AND A LARGE GROUP OF CONGRESSMEN, THUS IN A VERY SHORT TIME, PRINCE SULTAN WOULD BE ABLE TO PERSONALLY EXPRESS HIS VIEWS NOT ONLY TO THE PRESIDENT BUT TO KEY CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS. PRINCE SULTAN SAID THAT HE WOULD BE MORE THAN PLEASED TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS TO THESE GENTLEMEN.

5. I ALSO MENTIONED THAT MISS BARBARA BODINE, NEA/POL-MIL WAS VISITING JIDDA AT THE MOMENT AND SHE FOLLOWED MILITARY PROCUREMENT FOR THIS AREA. PRINCE SULTAN SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE MISS BODINE AND WE ARRANGED AN APPOINTMENT FOR DECEMBER 3 AT 1030 HOURS.
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